

ARMY GROUND-ACCIDENT REPORT **COUNTERMEASURE**

Volume 18 Number 5

<http://safety.army.mil>

May 1997



A different kind of war

Another trouble spot has erupted in a third world country. The President orders deployment of U.S. military forces. The Pentagon responds. Troops are landed and, within months, 130 Army soldiers have been killed. Families ask why nothing is being done to protect their sons and daughters, and the media demands to know what went wrong.

The 130 soldiers lost in FY 96 were not involved in an Army operation. They died in privately owned vehicle (POV) accidents; and they died needlessly. This is one war the Army isn't winning; POVs are the Number 1 killer of soldiers. POV fatalities in FY 96 accounted for 67 percent of all Army accident fatalities.

We stress risk-management at every opportunity, and we're making progress in almost every category. Soldier fatality rates have decreased in the categories of tracked vehicles, wheeled vehicles, aviation, and personnel injury. But POV fatality rates continue to rise. By the end of February of this fiscal year, 28 soldiers had died in POVs.

Why are soldiers dying in POVs?

Why, if soldiers are having fewer on-duty accidents, are we still losing them to off-duty POV accidents, and what can we do to change this senseless loss? Somehow we must convince soldiers to take what they have learned about risk management with them when they transition from operating that extremely

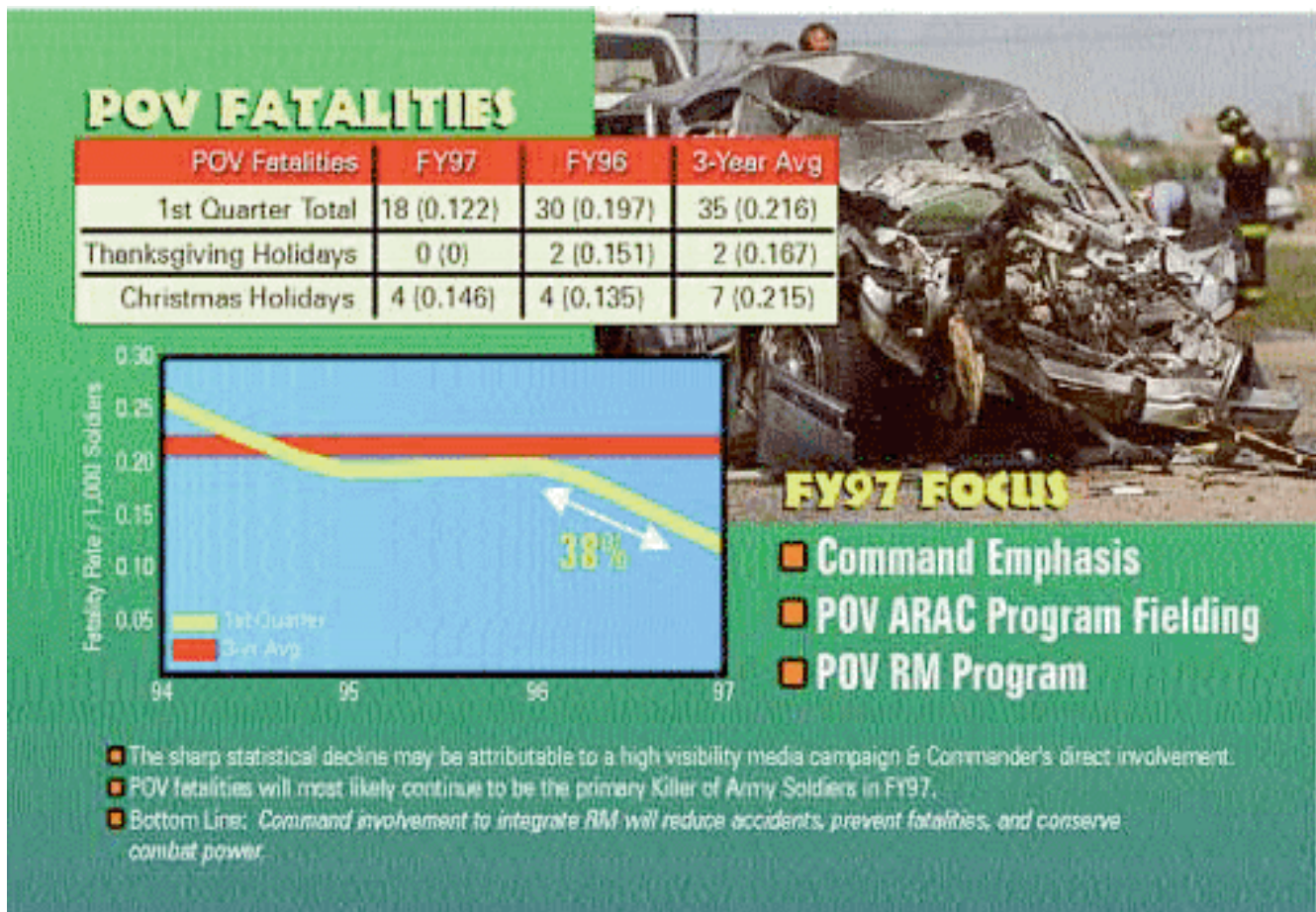
demanding piece of Army equipment to their personal vehicle.

What causes these accidents?

The greatest contributing factors to POV accidents are speed, fatigue, and alcohol.

Speed. While speed limits have been increased in many parts of the U.S., there is nothing to indicate that this speed limit change is a major factor in soldier POV fatalities. Personal attitude and lack of self-discipline have a greater effect on a person's likelihood to speed than the posted speed limit. Without a change in attitude and improvement in personal discipline, soldiers who speed when the limit is 55 will speed if the limit is 65. And driving the posted speed limit doesn't always mean you are driving at safe speed. Road conditions, weather, and the driver's level of alertness must be factored in to arrive at the safe speed.

Fatigue. Soldiers tend to go too far and wait too late to begin their return trip or they start after a long day at work. Visits home and to recreation areas are usually jam-packed with activities, and the



soldier may already be fatigued before the return-to-duty trip even begins. Then the pressure of getting back and signing in from leave or pass can cause even a normally good driver to skip rest stops and drive beyond his or her safe capabilities. Research shows a marked decrease in mental alertness after 2 hours of driving—even for fully rested drivers. AR 385-55 recommends a 10-minute break after every 2 hours, but drivers must recognize that even with breaks, the effects of fatigue are cumulative and the only sure cure is to stop and get some sleep.

Alcohol. The Army is making progress on decreasing incidents of DUI. The word is out that drinking and driving won't be tolerated. But in spite of many effective tools such as designated driver programs, cards providing telephone numbers soldiers can call for a ride if they have been drinking, and so forth, there are still too many POV accidents where alcohol is a factor.

Seatbelts. There just is no logical way to explain why soldiers don't use seatbelts. But accident reports make it clear that some don't. Statistics show over and over again that your seatbelt is a lifesaver—wear it, and insist that everyone else in your vehicle does the same.

Leader responsibility

The closer you are to your soldiers in the command chain, the better you will know them. Squad leaders and platoon sergeants know more about soldiers' driving habits than commanders. But awareness isn't enough. It is up to leaders at every level to take action to improve soldiers' driving habits and prevent accidents. This can range from awareness efforts, positive incentives, to recommending suspension or revocation of driving privileges when it becomes obvious that such action is needed.

Leader responsibility doesn't let individuals off the hook either. Soldiers need to examine their own driving habits and look at ways to improve. Additionally, soldiers know when other soldiers drive irresponsibly. You wouldn't turn a blind eye if a fellow soldier was mishandling a weapon, and you can't do it when the weapon is a POV. Like it or not, you are your brother soldier's keeper—don't let someone you know be the next statistic. ♦

Share the Success

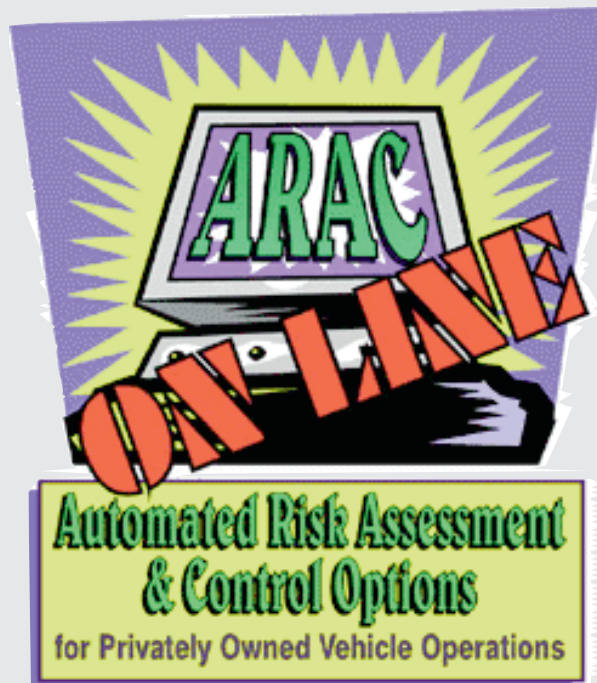
There are a lot of good ideas and programs out there that are helping in the war against POV accidents. If your unit or your installation is doing something that is making a difference and saving lives, let us help you share it with the rest of the Army. There are several ways you can contact Countermeasure:

- Phone: DSN 558-2688 (334-255-2688).
- Fax: DSN 558-9528/9478 (334-255-9528/9478).
- E-mail: countermeasure@safety-emh1.army.mil.
- Mail: Commander, U.S. Army Safety Center, ATTN: CSSC-OSA-G (Countermeasure), Bldg. 4905, 5th Ave., Fort Rucker, AL 36362-5363.

ARAC is on the Web

In the October 1996 issue of Countermeasure, we published an article "Soldiering in Cyberspace," announcing the Automated Risk Assessment and Controls (ARAC) for POV Operations and a toolbox of POV force-protection (risk-management) ideas for commanders, leaders/NCOs, and soldiers.

The ARAC program has been field tested and is now available on the Safety Center home page at safety.army.mil.



Stayin' alive

At 0700 formation on Saturday, the first sergeant received a report from one of her platoon sergeants that a soldier had been killed in a privately owned vehicle (POV) accident.

Late the night before, the soldier in question left his civilian job and began a journey that would end his life. He had awakened at 0400 on that Friday morning, traveled to work, and spent 10 hours on the job. After working his 10-hour shift, he immediately went to his POV and began the drive to the drill site. Approximately 75 miles down the road he began to feel drowsy, but he didn't stop. Minutes later, his POV left the roadway, hit a guardrail, and overturned three times. The soldier was ejected from his vehicle. Like most reservists and guardsmen this was a dedicated soldier, but he never made it to drill that weekend.

Is this scenario familiar to you? It happens every weekend although, fortunately, not always with such tragic consequences. Reservists and guardsmen work long hard hours, and then often set out for a long drive to their drill hall or

armory. Some of them never reach their destination. Would this story have ended differently if this soldier had practiced some basic risk management: identifying and assessing hazards, developing controls and making a decision, and implementing controls before setting out on his journey.

The most obvious hazard was fatigue. This soldier's day had begun very early, and he had worked for 10 hours before beginning his journey to drill. If he had used the following controls, he might still be alive.

- Get a few hours of sleep before starting the drive to drill.

- Arrange an alternate way of getting to drill (perhaps getting someone who is less tired to do the driving).

- Always wear your safety belt.

Last year, 44 POV accidents accounted for 46 injuries and 13 deaths of our reservists and guardsmen while traveling to and from drill. These accidents can be minimized if we look at some of the causes and apply a risk-management approach to help prevent them from occurring. We suggest you use the POV ARAC program (see figure on page 3) to evaluate your risks and identify controls you can implement.

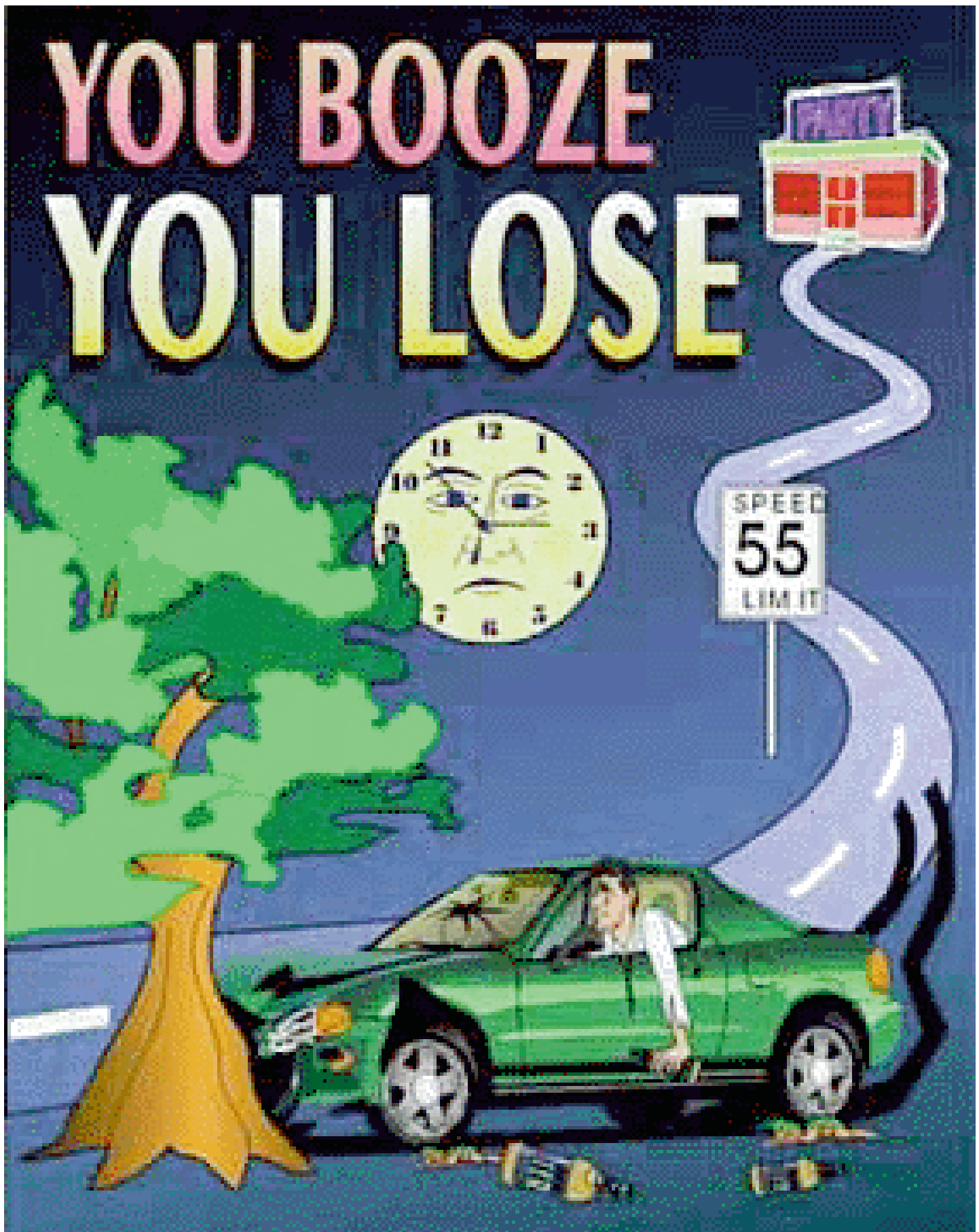
Commanders and leaders need to understand the risk that their soldiers take while making their way to drill. Consider using commander/leader module of the POV ARAC to assess risk and identify controls that can be implemented. Let your soldiers know that you care for their well-being. Add to your safety briefings a reminder that soldiers traveling long distances should take rest breaks. Commanders need to identify high-risk soldiers, in terms of work schedules, and miles driven, and implement controls for those soldiers.

Don't let your formation be the next one to hear that one of your soldiers was injured or killed in a POV accident.

POC: SFC(P) William R. Gunter, Ground Branch, USASC, DSN 255-2913 (334-255-2913), e-mail Gunterw@safety-emh1.army.mil

Driving to Stay Alive

- Obey all posted speed limits.
- Adjust speed for road conditions
- Ensure adequate rest before traveling.
- Plan trip so that adequate time is available and rest stops/breaks are included.
- Drive in pairs, driver and alternate driver, if possible.
- Drive sober. If you plan to drink, ensure someone is a designated driver.
- Use safety belts.
- Be prepared to take evasive action when other drivers make mistakes.
- Check mechanical condition of POV before starting your trip.



ON-DUTY



OFF-DUTY



RISK MANAGEMENT

A Continuous Process



Traveling down the risk-management highway

Applying risk management in the field

This section of Countermeasure is intended to provide a way for units throughout the Army to share risk-management ideas. Publication in Countermeasure does not constitute indorsement by the Safety Center of a unit's policy as doctrine. Our goal is to make it easy to exchange information that will expand understanding and application of risk management in training and operational environments.

This month's submission deals with the hazard of junior enlisted soldiers operating Army motor vehicles (AMVs) without an NCO in the vehicle.

In this unit, soldiers in the grade of specialist and below cannot operate AMVs without an NCO in the vehicle. Exceptions are granted by the battalion commander in accordance with the policy at figure 1. This is the policy these commanders use to aid them in making their

assessment. Of note is the point system used by this battalion in making its soldier risk assessment. Commanders of other units should consider adopting a similar system to identify and certify soldiers as single drivers.

The success of this forum for exchange of risk-management information will depend on input from you. We encourage you to tell us about risk-management ideas that are working in your unit. Because space is limited, we ask you to be as brief as possible while still providing enough detail that other units can evaluate the idea for possible use.

We are also inviting you to participate in naming this section of Countermeasure. If we use your suggestion, you will receive a Safety Center coin engraved with your name. Call us or send us your ideas by e-mail, fax, or regular mail. (See box, page 3 for ways to contact Countermeasure.)

Figure 1.

**DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
104TH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BATTALION
FORT HOOD, TEXAS 76544**

AFZC-M-CDR

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Commander's Policy Memo #13 Certification of Single Drivers

1. All tactical and administrative vehicles operated by subordinate units of the 104th MI Battalion will have a TC in the grade of CPL or above present while operating a vehicle. The only exception will be vehicles operated by corporals and above, when participating in a convoy led by an NCO, or those operated by authorized single drivers.
2. Certain mission requirements necessitate the operation of a vehicle without an NCO TC. The battalion commander may authorize exceptionally responsible junior enlisted soldiers to operate a vehicle as a single driver. Such authorization will be kept to a minimum and made not on the basis of convenience, but rather as a matter of mission requirements.
3. Procedures for authorization of single drivers.
 - a. Commanders will complete a certification document stating the soldier's qualification to perform as a single driver, a risk assessment, and the unit's responsibility for supervision.
 - b. Soldiers designated as single drivers will complete a statement of responsibility.
 - c. Both documents will be presented to the battalion commander along with the soldier's 348 and 346E. The 348 will state: "This driver has been certified by the commander and authorized to operate the vehicle

as a single driver for (vehicle type).” The 346E will state “Authorized Single Driver” in the remarks portion. Both licensing forms must be signed by the battalion commander.

4. Soldier Qualification Standards.

a. The soldier has demonstrated exceptional maturity and responsibility and can drive safely without supervision.

b. The soldier has been in this unit for three months, and has been licensed on and operated a military vehicle for at least one year.

c. The soldier has had no moving violations, accidents, or traffic-related incidents in the past year.

d. The soldier is properly trained in the areas of vehicle maintenance, operation of the assigned military vehicle, on- and off-road vehicle operations, and night driving.

e. Be identified as a low-risk soldier (see risk assessment below).

f. Single-driver licensing will be approved for a specific vehicle type.

5. Unit responsibilities.

a. Decide on each occasion when this driver is to be allowed to drive as a single driver. The decision should be based on the weather/terrain conditions, the soldier’s level of experience and training, the amount of sleep in the last 24 hours, the availability of qualified TCs, and the importance of the mission. At no time will a single driver be used out of convenience.

b. Provide a TC whenever possible and under any condition where risk to the soldier is in question.

c. Ensure that the soldier’s vehicle and supporting equipment is complete and free of deadlining or safety deficiencies.

d. Units will complete the following Soldier Risk Assessment Matrix prior to recommending a driver.

Risk Factors	Points (All or None)	Points Assessed
1. Self Discipline (dependability): Soldier knows and is trained to standard, but doesn’t follow standard.		
a. Counseled for poor performance (3 times in last 12 months, or more than 4 times in last 24 months).	8	
b. Had at-fault accidents or citations (2-4 in last 12 months or 5 or more in last 24 months).	14	
c. Abused alcohol/drugs (in last 12 months) or referred to community mental health (last 24 months).	14	
d. Had judicial/nonjudicial punishment (last 24 months).	8	
e. GT score of 90 or less (enlisted).	6	
f. Male under age 25.	2	
g. Not married.	4	
h. Financial irresponsibility.	4	
i. No Safety Belt use.	nn	
2. Training (job skills and knowledge): Soldiers lack training or perform tasks to standard.		
a. Cannot perform MOS tasks to standard.	6	
b. Not proficient in assigned tasks outside MOS (has not received OJT, school, unit, or task training).	6	
Point Total		
0-22 Low Risk	Risk	Low
23-32 Moderate Risk	(Circle)	Moderate
33-42 High Risk		High
43+ Extremely High Risk		Ext High

e. Units will inform the battalion commander or command sergeant major of any information which might cause reconsideration or disqualification of the soldier as a single driver.

Never argue with a big truck

It was late on the Pennsylvania Turnpike, and Tom was still 2 hours from his destination. He was cranky and tired, and the transport truck in front of him was hogging the passing lane on the steep incline. Tom flashed his lights several times and honked his horn angrily. The inside lane was blocked by a truck too. Tom held his place in the passing lane at 20 miles an hour and stewed.

Things changed dramatically on the downgrade. A third truck came up behind him quickly, and the three 18-wheelers kept him wedged between them as they careened down the mountain at 70 miles an hour. His small Buick was never more than 10 feet from disaster. The episode taught Tom a new respect for big trucks and their drivers.

While most drivers are courteous professionals, trucks are potent dangers and should be handled with respect and caution.

According to the National Safety Council large trucks were involved in 4,814 fatalities in 1991. Almost 80 percent of the deaths happened to the other guy.

Self defense is the first rule

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says miscues by car drivers contribute significantly to nearly two-thirds of fatal car-truck accidents. With that in mind, here are some tips for peaceful coexistence with highway behemoths.

- Stay out of a truck's blind spot.
- If you can't see a truck's mirrors, you're probably in its "rear" blind spot, which trails about 200 feet directly behind a truck.
- Blind spots exist along both sides of trucks. Experts say the right blind spot is especially dangerous because trucks like to swing into the right lanes to avoid troubles in the road ahead.
- If you are in a truck's blind spot, drop back or pull forward. Don't ride alongside a truck.
- The American Trucking Association suggests that drivers following trucks should position their cars at either side of the lane so they can be seen in the truck's mirrors.
- Don't try to sneak up on trucks. They need to know your whereabouts. Let them know you're there, and give them plenty of room to maneuver.
- Leave a truck room to change lanes in heavy traffic.
- If a truck approaches quickly on a steep

downhill grade, pull to the right and let him pass. He may have lost his braking power.

- In wet weather, exercise more caution.
- Be alert for trucks swinging wide to turn corners.

Some passing remarks

■ Before passing a truck, blink your headlights, whether it's day or night.

■ Do you really have to pass the truck? In many cases you gain very little time in passing a truck and risk the possibility of a head-on crash, a sideswipe or being run off the road. These dangers are especially prevalent in inclement weather when the truck's spray blurs your vision.

■ Pass fast, but don't speed. Don't tarry. Get beyond the truck as quickly as possible.

■ Even on dry surfaces, trucks need twice as much stopping distance as cars. Cooperate with truckers by allowing plenty of safety cushion for the truck when you pull into the lane in front of it. Don't pull into the truck's lane until you can see the truck in your rear view mirror.

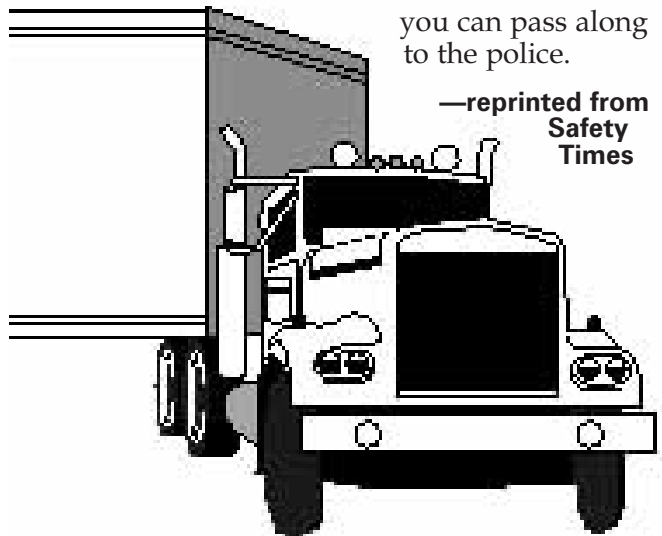
■ Stay as far away as possible when encountering a truck on the highway to reduce the wind blast.

The best revenge

■ No matter how irritated you may be with a trucker, don't retaliate. It's a losing battle.

■ If you encounter an unsafe trucker, take down the registration number painted on the cab, the license number, the name of the company, or any other information that you can pass along to the police.

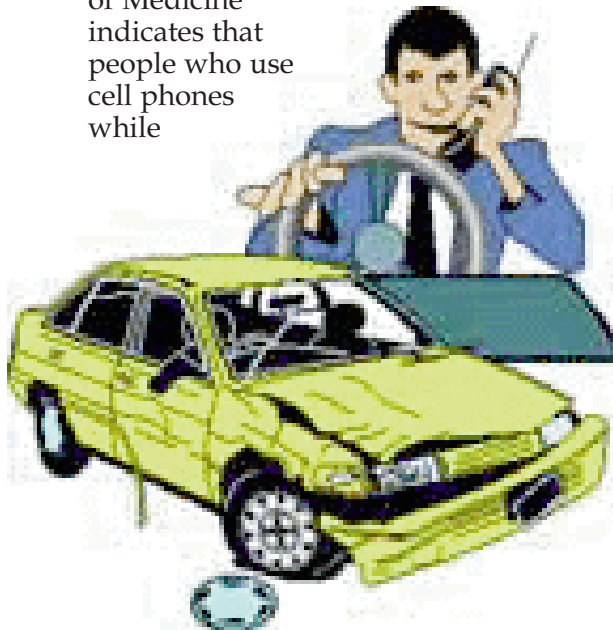
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Safety
Times



Talking and driving don't mix

That cellular phone that makes parents of young people rest easier because it can be used to call for help in case of a vehicle breakdown now itself appears to be a risk factor in vehicle accidents.

A study by researchers at the University of Toronto published in the New England Journal of Medicine indicates that people who use cell phones while

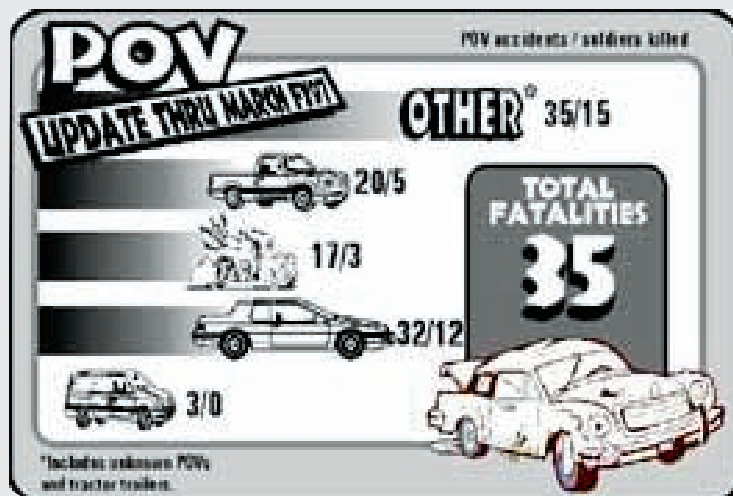


driving are four to five times more likely to be involved in traffic accidents than nonusers. And the increased chances of an accident can remain as long as 15 minutes after the call has been completed. So it isn't just while you're on the phone that your risk is increased. In fact, telephones that allow the driver's hands to be free do not appear to be safer than hand-held telephones. All age groups of drivers who use cell phones while driving showed increased risk of accidents, but the highest risk was among young people who are still in high school.

Controls

This is an easy one: find a safe place to pull over, stop your vehicle, and make your call. But watch those emergency lanes on interstates, they weren't intended to be telephone booths and stopping your vehicle in them can present another set of hazards.

Cellular phones are like other distractors (whether it's tuning the radio, trying to look at a map, or dealing with rambunctious kids). A split second's inattention even at low speeds can cause an accident. ♦



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